

Minutes of the **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING** of Buckingham held in Buckingham Community Centre on Friday 22nd March 2013 at 7.30pm

Present: Cllr. R. Newell Town Mayor
Cllr. P. Collins
Cllr. J. Harvey
Cllr. P. Hirons
Cllr. M. Smith
Cllr. C. Strain-Clark
Cllr. R. Stuchbury
Cllr. M. Try
Cllr. W. Whyte

Cllr. D. Isham Chairman, AVDC
Cllr. T. Mills Buckingham North, AVDC

Other residents:
Mr R Blackall
Mrs B Farmer
Mr P Fealy Buckingham Youth Clubs LTD
Mr A Goodgame
Mr R Hodges
Mr A Johnson
Mr R Munday
Mr E Pepper Buckingham & Winslow CAB
Mr M Riscan
Mr I Smart
Mr P Strain-Clark
Mr P Walker
Mrs S Walker

Non-residents
Mr M Gadd
Ms J Uglow
Mr R Secret Buckingham Summer Festival

Also present: Mr. Christopher Wayman – Town Clerk
Mrs. Anita Simonds – Deputy Town Clerk
Mrs. Claire Bolton – Committee Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

RESOLVED to note that apologies were received from Councillors Bloomfield, G Collins, Mordue and Mahi, Mr. J. Bercow MP, Cllr. J. Cartwright (Leader, AVDC), Mr. A. Grant (Chief.Exec., AVDC), Mr. Jon McGinty (Deputy Chief Executive, AVDC), Mr. C. Williams (Chief.Exec.,BCC), Cllr. M. Clayton (Chairman, BCC), Mr Paul Hodson, (Localities Manager, BCC) Cllr. M. Tett (Leader, BCC), Mrs T Foster (Buckingham Traders Association), Mr T Kealey (Chancellor, University of Buckingham) Insp. E. Garside, Thames Valley Police.

2. To receive and approve the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 28th March 2012

The Minutes were approved. There were no matters arising.

3. To receive a report by the Mayor of Buckingham and the Chairmen of the different Committees on the work of Buckingham Town Council

The Mayor reported that due to the absence of Cllr G Collins, this report would include detail from the Finance, Administration and Personnel Committee –

I want to start off by thanking all those who have worked hard for the Council over the past year, this includes Chris Wayman our Town Clerk, who ably heads up our team of staff, ably assisted by Anita our deputy clerk, and all Councillors but particularly the committee chairs and the willing Councillors who help at the many events we put on. Councillors discuss and agree policy at our weekly meetings but its the Town Council staff who do all the work in between meetings.

Chris Wayman has been a great help with the Neighbourhood development plan, through gaps in staff in post, when Sam sadly moved on, and then Prerana was only with us for a couple of months, we've advertised the post, but Chris continues to cover the work for us with knock on back up support from the office.

Katharine our longest serving staff member is a wonderful help and support to the Planning Committee and stepped into the breach of clerking meetings until our new committee clerk Claire Bolton was appointed. Claire has done amazingly well, settling in and picking up the job and making it her own.

Jodie (Accounts) has continued to improve the accounts system this year and year end was run successfully. She has completed the transition to the new payroll system and continues to improve cheque deadlines and queries.

Amanda (Event Assistant) has worked very hard from the moment she joined the Council and over the last year she has improved the events and gave us a great Jubilee weekend and wonderful food fair, but more of that from Robin.

Bill (Market Manager) Bill has taken over the markets in 2012 and has already made a significant difference to the running of them. He has improved the collection of rent, spoken for the traders and maintains a decent balance between his representation of traders and his duties to the Town Council. Traders feel comfortable with him and speak very positively of him.

Louise our Admin Assistant ably supports the communication group who put together the Buckingham Town Matters publication, and that has run smoothly.

Ken has been an excellent appointment to our Grounds Maintenance team, under Lee and the Green Spaces team so more of that form the chairman of EP&H.

The Council continues to work with many groups in the Town, the Buckingham Society have a representative on our Planning Committee, the Green Buckingham Group, the Buckingham Twinning Association, the Fairtrade steering group, the Buckingham Community Wildlife Project, the Destination Buckingham Group, the Buckingham Economic Group and the Buckingham and Maids Moreton Neighbourhood Action Group. We've worked with MK Dons, businesses, Project Street Life, schools and businesses and had a number of events in the town and then the MK Dons Buckingham Big Day on 16th March when over 600 MK18 residents took up the offer of reduced tickets for the football game.

We've also worked with AVDC and BCC with shared funding provided for "older youth" initiatives designed to give them something to do rather than hang about on street corners. This year, we already have **Street Hockey** (funded by the Sports for Streets Initiative and Sport England), and later in the year we will (hopefully) see a **film project** at PSL, "**Gymivate**" to get up to 50 youngsters using the gym at Swan Pool, **Boccia** at The Buckingham School and possibly **Tag Rugby** in Bourton Park. Also planned is an **Open Mic Night**, days when the **Mobile Climbing Wall** will be in Linden Village and at Maids Moreton, and **Sumo-suit Wrestling** and other **inflatables** in Overn Crescent. Dates for these events will be announced soon, providing the partnership funding can be confirmed.

The Town Council is, of course, planning three **Family Fun Days** in Chandos Park (on 1, 22 and 28 August), and the Youth Council plan a **Skate Park competition** on 22 June.

With regard to **Destination Buckingham**, AVDC provide the funding. During the year the Group commissioned a **Benchmarking Study** and a **Visitor Impressions Report** from Action for

Market Towns which gave valuable indications of improvements that can be made – not all of them within the gift of the Town Council. The Group helped fund the publicity for the Traders' Association **Shopping Spectacular** and the recent highly successful **Food Fair**. The www.buckinghamuk.info website is being completely re-structured and will soon go live in much improved form. Some huge **photos of Buckingham** were commissioned to use at public and civic events, and perhaps to also display in the few empty shops we have. The Group has earmarked funding for publicising the forthcoming **Spring Fair** and, subject to funding, plans to organise a **conference for tourist providers** in the north Bucks area in order to up-sell the many attractions in our area.

We have streamlined our committees, and added in additional responsibilities thanks to the suggestions from Cllr Jon Harvey, who has also suggested that we have a business plan to make us more efficient and business like and we are working on that, so it is good to have new cllrs joining us and suggesting improvements in the way we work. It's also been lovely to welcome back Christine Strain- Clark on to the Council and I am pleased to say she's increased our female percentage on the Council to 23%.

There are some things that happen in Buckingham that are beyond our control, and no matter how good the points we put forward, another authority goes against what we want this happens in planning issues, but also in the last year this has happened by the introduction of charges at the swan pool car park when we had evidenced that there were always free spaces, this was in response to users of the leisure centre who complained about lack of spaces, but we find there were only 9 complaints in a year! Also, concerning the loss of free parking for the first hour at the Cornwall's meadow car park. We put forward a scheme to Aylesbury Vale as to how this could be worked maintaining the free parking, but they chose to go a different way, and we remain concerned about its effect on people using our town.

Also the very recent work on the by-pass that has spoilt that area and demolished the lovely screens between the traffic and housing.

In closing thanks again to our staff, and also to our Councillors who put in many hours on a voluntary basis to try and improve things here in Buckingham. Under the committees there have been lots of achievements and I am sure the committee chairs will mention them to you, i.e. The Bourton Park Play Area that I opened in February, Cemetery Extension, Jubilee Weekend, Olympic Torch, Neighbourhood Plan

I am pleased to announce that next year's Town Council's element of your Council Tax will remain unchanged for the 4th consecutive year.

Cllr. Mike Smith, Chair of the Environment & Property Committee

The Town Council's Environment, Property and Health Committee is authorised by the Full Council to take responsibility for the protection and improvement of the town. We make recommendations to the Full Council regarding any land or property held or leased, and any proposed purchases or sales.

We keep an eye on work required to footpaths, pavements, cycle-ways, roads, waterways, horticultural and arboriculture works, street furniture (seats, planters and waste bins), play areas, and play equipment. More recently, the "health" element has been added to promote all aspects of community safety and general "wellbeing" in our town. Not all of this falls within the Town Council remit, however, so we liaise closely with our District and County Council partners on the maintenance of those items for which they have specific responsibility.

The bulk of the Town Council "estate" comprises Chandos and Bourton Parks, the Cemetery (including the house and chapels), the Railway Walk and other open spaces. Apart from

ensuring that these areas are properly maintained, we work closely with local Conservation Volunteers and various "friends" groups whose unstinting work helps to maintain and improve these valuable resources and protect the indigenous wild life.

During the past year, with the diligent efforts of our Green Spaces Manager and his hard-working team, we have seen continuing improvements to Bourton Park and our Cemetery. It is also worth noting that, although it falls outside of town council remit, our outdoor team has played a major part in keeping our town centre clear of ice and snow in the recent bad weather. Comprehensive Park Management Plans are in now place.

In Bourton Park, new play equipment, designed for older children, was opened by our Mayor in mid-February, and we continue to consider installing a Trim Trail. We have replaced some picnic benches that were well past their sell-by date, and replaced some fencing – including a section that was destroyed by vandals during the last bonfire night celebrations. We have been looking at replacing or repairing the otter sculptures

After five years of deliberation, and now that Anglian Water had resolved the drainage issues in Chandos Park, we agreed in October to go out to tender for replacing the path from Chandos Road into the park. The money was in place for and acceptable tenders were duly received but, despite agreeing that the funds continue to be earmarked for that purpose at our Precept meeting in January. Just a month later it was decided not to proceed for the time being. Speaking from a personal point of view, this was silly as the work to get to that stage had been considerable, the path is only going to deteriorate further and costs will inevitably rise – but there you are. We'll try again later in the year.

In the Cemetery, a new Garden of rest has been laid out and is maturing nicely; although lack of available grave space gives continuing cause for concern. Memorial safety testing has started, and general maintenance continues to improve. Problems with the East Chapels have been identified and steps are being taken to undertake quite extensive remedial action. Cemetery Lodge continues to be rented out.

The War Memorial at the parish church also falls under our remit and, after much discussion and consultation, we are about to refresh its standing and replace the bollards to make it far less susceptible to vehicle damage.

We are also looking at providing additional public toilets in the town centre – something that is not mandatory for local authorities but which are clearly needed by our residents and visitors.

We are hopeful of AVDC replacing the Bridge Street play equipment in the coming months, and hope that the skate park may also be refreshed. In the meantime, we are continuing to look at the possibility of providing additional Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs) in Bourton Park and on the green space in Embleton Way.

For the first time, we have looked at Fuel Poverty in the town, and have invited suppliers to indicate what measures may be available for those in difficulty. Responses have been slow, but we are continuing to explore the possibilities.

We have agreed in principle to install solar panels on the Community Centre roof, in order to reduce fuel bills and perhaps even recoup some money. Discussions with the Community Centre Management Committee and others continue.

Re-installation of the CCTV camera in Chandos Park, and another one in the High Street, were eventually completed in January following BCC procrastination about lamp post strength testing. The new cameras not only deter would-be vandals, but enable the police and our office to record incidents with sufficient clarity to identify offenders.

Finally, since the X5 has been re-routed through the town, we have noticed that the shelter at the Bus Stand is now inadequate. We are also aware that the AVDC contractors have been less than diligent with their cleaning regime. Discussions are currently underway to replace the shelter with a larger version, and the Town Council taking responsibility for its cleaning.

From the foregoing, it will be clear that the Committee has extensive responsibilities and has achieved a lot in the last year or so. As Chairman I am grateful for the hard work of the committee members and of the Green Spaces staff, who together help to make Buckingham a nice place to be.

Cllr. Warren Whyte, Chairman of the Planning Committee,

Reported the planning committee has been incredibly busy last year; not only reviewing 133 planning applications but also coordinating the Neighbourhood Development Plan and reviewing several national and local consultations regarding the many forthcoming changes to the planning system.

The committee keeps a close eye on planning and advertising breaches, particularly when they could impact upon a listed building or the conservation area. We also take part in AVDC's Planning Liaison Group and the North Bucks Parishes Planning Consortium. We are currently in conversation with the County Council with regards to a new strategic transport plan and a revised and extended cycle network.

During the year we have received a number of presentations, including the old Chandos Cinema site, the vacant Focus store, Ford Meadow and a site on Bourton Road by the cricket club, and have been in discussion with the University about their future plans, and how they will impact upon the Neighbourhood Plan.

Over the last year, around 90% of the many projects we supported or had no objection to go on to be approved by the district council. Where we opposed an application, around 60 % went on to be approved, but often with amendments that mitigate some of the council's concerns. To assist us in reviewing applications, comments from residents sent to the town council are very helpful, as is addressing the committee at the public session with points that provide support or opposition to a proposal.

On recent issues, we were disappointed at the appeal decision regarding the additional houses in Moreton Road, and are pleased that AVDC are challenging the decision at the High Court. We are also concerned about further changes to the proposed Market Hill development, and the lack of retail and affordable housing now being proposed, together with the incomplete nature of Candleford Court and the state it has been left in.

Work continues with the Neighbourhood Plan, with some very well-attended events over the last few months. We were pleased with the full-house we had for the lecture on Buckingham's historical context. We are now moving into the more detailed stage of the Plan, so do look out for events during the spring and summer to get involved with, as we want to make sure the plan develops with input from a wide range of people.

The committee is grateful for the dedicated work of our committee clerk Katharine McElligott.

Cllr. Robin Stuchbury, Chairman of the Town Centre and Events Committee, reported a particularly busy year, with extra events included in the Council's calendar and thanked all staff and Councillors for their efforts. The committee had delivered all events within budget and ideas were always seen as a new opportunity.

There had been many well-attended events throughout the year, especially the two music festivals and the bonfire and fireworks. Additional events the Town Council supported in 2012 had included the Jubilee celebrations, Beacon in the Park and the Olympic Torch relay. These events had drawn large audiences from both the town and the surrounding area. Staff had worked tirelessly to ensure all additional events were a success.

Cllr O'Donoghue continued to work hard with the Youth Council of the town, supporting a Local Democracy week event and working on a series of events for drama and art with both secondary schools. This had culminated in an event with people from both schools, written and performed by themselves; showcasing the great achievement of young talent in the town and surrounding area.

The addition of the recent two day Food Fair event in February had proved hugely successful with over 1,000 people visiting on the first day.

The Comedy nights, whilst revenue neutral, were always very well supported and offered an attractive alternative evening's entertainment for local people. The Charter fair, despite being sometimes challenging to organise; was an immense burden, but also a huge privilege for the Town to hold.

In closing Cllr Stuchbury stated that he had been the Chairman of the Town Centre and Events Committee for a number of years and was very grateful to those who participated, attended, supported and worked on all events to ensure them a continuing community success.

4. To receive presentations from representatives of other entities on their work in 2011/2012

4.1 Buckinghamshire County Council

Mr. C. Williams (Chief.Exec.,BCC), Cllr. M. Clayton (Chairman, BCC), Mr Paul Hodson, (Localities Manager, BCC) and Cllr. M. Tett (Leader, BCC) apologised for their non-attendance.

4.2 Aylesbury Vale District Council & Buckingham Partnership

Mr. Jon McGinty apologised for his non-attendance.

4.3 Thames Valley Police

Inspector Garside apologised for her non-attendance. Cllr Smith read out the following report – The Police station has now relocated to Unit 12 Swan Business Centre, Osier Way. 24 /7 Response teams and neighbourhood officers work from the new Unit. The move has not impacted on our service delivery and on a practical level the space and provision we now have is far better than the Moreton Road building. The intention is to sell the Moreton Road site. Police "memorabilia" from days gone by shall be shared with the Old Gaol museum in due course. The front counter remains in the Old Gaol and is open Mon – Fri between the hours of 10.00 – 14.00. Unita Hopkins, who previously covered our station duty officer (SDO) role in the Old Gaol, has now started her new role as a PCSO on the neighbourhood team. Natasha May is our new SDO.

Neighbourhood Team boundaries changed in October 2012 and this brings our neighbourhood boundaries in line with the boundaries of the Buckingham District Local Area Forum. The neighbourhood team has also adopted the same name as the LAF and is now called the Buckingham District neighbourhood. Crime data now covers the whole of this area although can be broken down to simply focus on the town of Buckingham if this were required.

Discussions are ongoing with interested NAG Chairs across the area to consider creating one NAG (neighbourhood action group) for the whole Buckingham District area rather than having separate groups operating. This would be supported by the Police but the decision is not for the Police to make.

A new shift pattern was implemented in October 2012 which has staff working later into the night on Friday and Saturday evenings (02.00 and 03.00hrs finish respectively). This will enhance our visibility at key times when patrolling the night time economy in Buckingham town centre and also give a Police presence/deterrence in rural areas where we know offending can be prevalent overnight.

There have been a few staff changes and some absence due to long term sickness. Sgt Zoe Hardy is the new Neighbourhood Sergeant and from 1st April Inspector James Davies will temporarily be covering my role. I have been given a temporary promotion to Chief Inspector due to retirements of other senior officers. I shall be remaining in Aylesbury Vale as the Deputy Commander and look forward to retaining contact with many of you in my new role. This is likely to be for a period of approximately 6 months.

Crime data note this is for the whole Buckingham District area and compares the period 01/04/12-28/02/13 with the same period in the years 2010/11.

Joint crime reduction campaigns continue to be delivered in partnership with AVDC community safety team and these have focussed on burglary, ASB and vehicle crime at key times throughout year. eg Halloween, clocks going back, Xmas period, Spring (shed breaks)

All reported crime has fallen by 246 reports from 1085 – 839

Burglary dwelling offences have dropped from 51-39

Theft of motor vehicle dropped 43 – 18

Robbery of personal property dropped 4 -2

Theft from motor vehicle increased 77- 95. ** This is the category causing most concern at this time. All the cars which have been targeted in recent spates have had items left on display inside them eg handbags, tools, sat navs etc

Criminal damage offences dropped 148 – 116

Burglary non dwellings dropped 137 -54

Neighbourhood Priorities (in addition to crime reduction and detection)

Anti social behaviour: Lots of joint work with agencies and the University to better understand a perception of students contributing to an increase in ASB and noise issues in the town. With the exception of a small number of individuals this ASB is not directly attributed to all students at the Uni. Ongoing work with licensing and environmental health which may assist with evidence gathering if we consider the introduction of EMRO's. (licensing legislation) Multi agency group meets to plan a programmes of activities for young people and attempts to divert some away from the criminal justice system. Ongoing work in Candleford Court area with housing providers to manage ASB of some tenants.

Speeding; remains a concern for local people and monthly enforcement activities will re commence. Stratford Road, London Road and Moreton Road been reported as having speeding issues.

HGV's in town centre: The team will continue to monitor and take enforcement action although improved signage on routes into Buckingham and SAT Navs being updated could be having a positive impact as the issue does not appear as prevalent.

Drugs: Warrants are executed when we have intelligence to support the supply of drugs. A drugs dog operation was conducted with support of all licensed premises in the town and persons in possession of drugs were apprehended. This is likely to be repeated.

Joint work with AVDC Licensing around taxi checks and Trading Standards re underage sales will continue.

Joint work with Adult social care which includes visiting those people on the In Touch programme continues and we have recently renewed links with the Children's centre in Buckingham.

A TAG rugby initiative was run during the school summer holidays July – Aug 2012 in conjunction with the RFU, TVP and AVDC. If funding can be secured for the cost of coaching staff this will hopefully run again this summer.

All residents are being encouraged to sign up to TVP Alerts to receive free crime and safety messages. This can be done by visiting the TVP website and registering. www.thamesvalleyalert.co.uk

Nominations are also out for people to vote for their Community Officer of the year. There are three weeks left to vote. Further information can be found at the Thames Valley Police website. www.thamesvalley.police.uk.

5. To receive reports by recipients of 2012/2013 grants over £1000

5.1 Buckingham Summer Festival

Mr Secret informed the meeting of the recent sad death of his friend and co-founder of the festival, Mr Alan Brook.

Mr Secret reported that the Buckingham Summer festival put on sixteen professional concerts during the space of one week; with great support from a network of volunteers, feverishly organising the administration and selling tickets. Funding for the arts was sometimes controversial in difficult economic times and the week's events would not go ahead without the generous support of the Town Council.

Local traders were keen to support the Summer Festival; some have reported that people coming in for morning or lunchtime concerts frequently visited the local shops afterwards.

The coming year would see actor Robert Powell attend the festival on the evening of April 7th doing a programme about Debussy, and during the week (in addition to morning piano recitals and lunchtime concerts), there would be a baroque concert, a folk band called Pig Earth, 4 girls 4 harps; Zoe Martlow on the Friday evening with an interesting cello cabaret and on Saturday the return of fantastic violinist Dima Tkachenko playing the Tchaikovsky Concerto.

Mr Secret encouraged attendance to this year's events and re-iterated the Summer Festival's grateful support of the Town Council.

5.2 Buckingham, Winslow & District Citizen's Advice Bureau

Mr Edward Pepper introduced himself as Chairman of the Trustees of Buckingham, Winslow & District CAB and as an active member of SSAFA Forces Help which looks after past and present members of the Armed forces and their families. Mr Pepper was standing in for Janis Harding, the Bureau Manager to give the report.

Mr Pepper went on to say that the CAB had been selected for the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2011 and stated that the Bureau remained a highly effective and responsive organisation. The Town Council had kindly granted the bureau the sum of £5000 for the coming year and Mr Pepper believed it would be money very well spent in providing an essential service to the citizens of Buckingham and District. The Bureau's major role was to provide advice and help to the most vulnerable in society; giving advice on a whole range of benefits – employment legislation, equity law, debt and money advice, housing and many other legal matters. The advice is normally dispensed from the Buckingham office by a team of volunteer advisors either face to face or by telephone. Mr Pepper reported a new national helpline, giving faster access to services which deals with some 14,000 different and complex problems each year. The Bureau also runs a Home Visiting Service for clients who cannot access the main bureau; it was hoped to be able to expand the service, though funds were not currently available. Last year the Bureau carried out over 300 home visits and secured entitled benefits of nearly £400,000 on behalf of clients; also helping to manage £1 million of debt. The local Bureau whilst gaining vast experience from dealing with a huge variety of different problems is able to feed ideas and recommendations to CAB National, who in turn lobby Government Departments, helping to change legislation. The Bureau also run a County Court Help Desk, and had helped to prevent 250 families from being evicted; dealing with over £500,000 of mortgage arrears and £300,000 in rent arrears. CAB county wide initiatives also include specialist money advice team, warmer homes/healthier people, assisting with Community Impact Bucks, Children in Poverty, Families First and Prevention Matters. The biggest challenge now will be the massive change to the benefits system, to be fully implemented by 2018. Issues that CAB will help people to face as part of the benefit changes are likely to include Personal Independent Payment (replacing Disability Living Allowance), and under occupation of social housing. Mr Pepper closed by saying the CAB are proud of the way the Bureau operates and believes that practically every citizen of Buckingham knows someone who has benefited from their services.

5.3 Buckingham Youth Clubs LTD

Mr Patrick Fealey reported that in 2012 Buckingham Youth Clubs LTD became a registered charity and secured a long term lease on the Buckingham Youth Centre building. By increasing use of the centre there are now around 20 different local organisations (mostly aimed at young people) using the building, including two disability groups, three dance groups, karate, church youth group, Guides, Young Carers, Academy of Performing Arts, YOS and Connexions.

Since formation in 2011 Buckingham Youth Clubs LTD had run three clubs per week at Buckingham Youth Centre for the young people (typically 12-16) of Buckingham and the surrounding area. The grant provided by Buckingham Town Council was used to provide paid staff specifically for each of these clubs, typically one Youth Club Leader who also manages the youth centre and two Assistant Club Leaders for each club session which amounts to around £18,000 per annum out of a total budget of around £36,000 per annum.

The Youth Club have encouraged members to become more involved in the club and local community and this has resulted in several senior members becoming Junior Volunteer Leaders and together with a couple of new staff and adult volunteers enabled the increase of offerings to a wider range of your people; launching four new clubs in October 2012, replacing the previous three, which now cater for those aged 11-18.

Club for Year 9's (age 13-14) Monday 7pm – 9.30pm

Club for Year 8's (age 12-13) Thursday 7pm – 9.30pm

Club for year 7's (age 11-12) Friday 4.30pm – 6.30pm

Activities include: Internet, Games Stations, Music, TV, Pool, Table Football, Air Hockey, Table Tennis, Badminton, Basketball, 5-a-side Football and Dodgeball.

Seniors/Music Club 2nd and 4th Fridays in month (7pm – 9.30pm) Age 14-18 for a safe venue to practice/play or just listen to music and socialise with friends. The Youth Club have attracted 259 different young people to the club over the past 12 months, averaging around 75 per week in the earlier months and now up to 90-100 per week since increasing the clubs to a wider age range.

Members had been involved in fundraising such as last year's Rotary Xmas Float and also the Rotary Swimathon when 19 youth club members had been involved. They had applied for a grant to cover Young Leader training and had through other funds also provided a number of events for local senior citizens at the Jubilee and Christmas , with another event following next month. About 25 young people provided the Xmas Party on Sunday 16th December, helped senior citizens with bingo, provided entertainment, a raffle and refreshments and got tremendous feedback from both the young people and guests.

The Youth Club were also able to extend the range of activities through holiday periods this year by providing members with subsidised trips to Drayton Manor, Boscombe Seaside, Laser Combat (outdoor), Thorpe Park Fright Night and a 5-a-side Football competition, with other trips planned in the near future to Ice Skating and 10 pin bowling/laser quasar. This was possible through some additional specific funding and hoped to continue further trips this coming year.

5.4 Buckingham Centre for the Arts

Mr Mark Gadd reported on behalf of the Film Place management group to report on the use of the grants provided to them.

The Film Place began showing films about 7 years ago at the end of 2005. The equipment was getting tired and technology had moved on. There was a need to upgrade equipment including, ideally the installation of a much larger screen and enhancement of the general experience for the film goers. Had they not been able to do so there was a danger of the popularity of the Film Place going into decline and eventually fizzling out. It was therefore decided to undertake a major project to upgrade the facilities. In July 2012 The Film Place were given a grant of £2,000

by the Town Council which helped to gain a grant of £13,500 from AVDC to help finance the major changes needed.

The first priority was to install a high definition projector, a high definition AV system, and high definition players to drastically improve the picture quality. An upgrade to the sound system was also carried out and other work completed to improve the ambiance of the theatre with new lighting. This work was completed during the summer vacation 2012.

A large electrically operated screen had also been planned, but the building structure was found to be not strong enough. This had been a major blow, but with the University's help The Film Place was allowed to make changes to their main theatre, by removing the stage and dais and resurfacing the end wall to enable almost the whole wall to become a huge static screen almost 4 times larger than the last. This major phase had been completed, though small technical changes and improvements were still ongoing. Mr Gadd commented that he felt sure all 1,250 people who had been to the 14 films shown so far this year (with an average audience of 89 per film), had been impressed with the new facilities.

The next major phase of the project was due to begin shortly which would introduce big improvements to the front of house. This would entail new confectionary and ice-cream sales facilities, better signage and other items to make the entrance to The Film Place feel more like a professional cinema.

Since starting The Film Place has shown 640 films (or special events) with an overall audience of 30,668 (averaging 48 per film), demonstrating that it is a well-used and appreciated service to Buckingham.

Despite the success The Film Place operate at more or less break even and endeavour to keep ticket prices as low as possible. This means the organisation does need some financial help to undertake major upgrades. The Town Council also gave a grant of £1,250 to be used to subsidise showing children's and young adult films, normally shown at a loss, and allowed child/student ticket price to remain at £2.50. The biggest issue had been and continued to be how to attract youth and young adults - they want to see films when they first come out and want to go to a commercial cinema with all its facilities.

Mr Gadd thanked the University, who had been hugely supportive from the start and allowed The Film Place to use their main lecture theatre, week in and week out for no charge; also putting in about £3,000 to finance some of the improvements. Also to AVDC who had provided a large grant for the improvements, and to the large number of volunteers who staff the film shows and the management group who spend many hours organising and doing things behind the scenes which keep The Film Place running.

Finally a thank you to the Town Council who have also been hugely supportive from the start and provided annual grants to help keep ticket prices low and for the additional grant to help pay for the vast improvements which were now mainly implemented.

5.5 Buckingham Old Goal Trust

The following letter was read out from Helene Hill – Chairman

Re: Annual Grant

The Buckingham Old Goal Trust is grateful for the continuing financial support of Buckingham Town Council. The grant greatly assists the Trust in maintaining the listed building and in running the museum it contains. It helps us to keep admission charges low for the benefit of both local people and tourists.

A recent expense has been to have secondary glazing fitted to the windows in the Keeper's cottage which together with the cheaper volunteer-fitting of draught excluders to many doors will help reduce heating costs in the future. The Tourist Office staff and shop volunteers already remark how much warmer the Old Gaol is.

The next expense will be to fit some heating in the exercise yard. We have obtained professional advice for discrete units which will not detract from the historic ambience of the building. We hope then to increase lettings and thus income.

The visitor numbers for 2012 showed a small increase over the year before despite of or because of the bad weather in the summer. Again in the first two months of 2013, despite the snow in January, another small increase in visitors was recorded. We have continued to support the Trader's Association's initiatives to boost visitors too, and trade in the town.

I apologise for not being able to present this report in person, but I am attending a fundraising quiz night at the Old Gaol held by the Friends.

Thank you for also agreeing to house the town mace in the museum and for paying for the case for it.

6. Questions from the Residents of Buckingham

6.1 Written questions

J & G Smith, Question: My husband and I would like to ask the Council when are they going to look into 44 tonne lorries coming along Stratford Road doing a sharp left hand turn in Wharf Yard and getting stuck in the gateway to wharf yard and with the back end of the trailer over the main road and blocking the main road in both directions also blocking the front of our property this should be looked into before we get a serious accident.

Written response from T J Fowler, Customer Service Manager, Transport for Buckinghamshire
Dear Mr & Mrs Smith

We are aware of the constraints of the road layout in Stratford Road and the difficulty that large vehicles have in accessing Wharf Yard. Regrettably there is very little that can be done in terms of enforcement since there is no prohibition of large vehicles using this road for access and any proposal to implement such a restriction could significantly impact on the existing businesses. Current collision record does not give us any cause for concern or suggest that measures are necessary to prevent this manoeuvre.

We will however write to the businesses and bring your concerns to their attention requesting that they consider using more appropriately sized vehicles; however this will rely on their goodwill to implement any changes.

Yours sincerely

Mr R G Hodges, Question:

Reference: the ongoing roadwork being carried out on the A421, Buckingham Bypass

As a Buckingham resident, it has become apparent that the excavations being completed on the above named road are far more extensive than the notice which was circulated in the Buckingham and Winslow Advertiser dated November 2012.

The purpose of this letter is to raise the following points of concern and substantiate if the Town Council can ensure they are addressed by the County Council.

- a) The re-planting of trees or hedgerows that are being destroyed.*
- b) The relocation of footpaths and any street lighting that will be removed.*

c) *Some plans to minimise the noise levels as there are pensioners and night workers who are living adjacent to the road.*

Your help in this matter would be gratefully appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

Written response from Steve Essam, Transport Co-ordinator, Development Management - Place Service

Buckinghamshire County Council

Trees and hedgerows - Due to the extent of the alterations required to accommodate the realigned carriageway, roundabout and footways, it has proved necessary to remove a number of established trees and areas of existing hedgerow. However, every effort is being made to retain as much of the existing planting as possible, which, following completion, will be supplemented by an extensive landscaping and planting scheme. It should be noted that the removal of trees, hedges and landscaping, as well as the replanting scheme, was the subject of discussion with AVDC tree/conservation officers and then widely consulted upon, before being approved by AVDC as part of the planning application.

Footways and street lighting - As with all highway schemes, the developer and consultants have designed this scheme to current standards which will ensure that the correct levels of highway lighting are provided and that all footways and cycle ways in proximity of the development are enhanced to a significant degree.

Noise levels - As advised above, every effort is being made to retain as much of the existing planting as possible, which, with the replanting scheme and reformation of earth bunds, it is envisaged that noise levels will be kept to a minimum.

Regards

Mr P Walker, Question:

The allocation of residents permit parking to High Street Buckingham for those residents without access to off road parking!

Referring to the email trail it would seem having read "Appendix F - Permit Parking Policy" I believe we may well fit the criteria to qualify. Parking is a real issue for residence with very few alternatives. There are current twenty parking places of which 8-10 could be allocated to residents and still retain parking for local businesses. At present the High Street is been used both by local shops staff (daily) and bus travellers, with vehicles being left in some cases for days and weeks on end. All the residents fully understand and accept that a number of events during the year require all vehicles to be removed. The point remains the free parking is currently being abused and the residence are suffering for this.

The Mayor: Transport for Buckinghamshire have confirmed that these comments are being kept on file for the next area review of introduction of parking permits; the Town Council will discuss at the next Full Council meeting and take to the Local Area Forum for discussion.

Cllr Stuchbury: I would be happy to take any correspondence you have to make representation and ask Bucks County Council to follow up, please write to me care of the Town Council. Please also get support from your neighbours in writing.

Audience questions –

Mr A Goodgame

What is the current position regarding the persistent and repeated flooding experienced by residents as a result of the current development of Lace Hill?

The Mayor: This is not a Town Council matter, but for Aylesbury Vale District Council.

The Town Clerk: These are enforcement matters relating to the developer that rest with AVDC to respond to, however please let the office have a copy of correspondence so that we may progress.

Cllr Whyte: Enforcement is a regular agenda item for the Planning Committee. We have corresponded significantly on policy enforcement with AVDC, and this is one of many issues we are trying to bring to the attention of Planning Officers; your example clearly highlights where that is currently failing.

Cllr Stuchbury: I will talk to the other three District Councillors on this this issue and try to arrange a meeting with the Head of Planning Department to address these issues.

Mr R Blackall, Question:

Could the Green Spaces Team please visit public seats in the town to scrub them and remove chewing gum and bird mess?

The Town Clerk: We will have a look at doing so if feasible, though the public seating in the town is the responsibility of AVDC, The Town Council are responsible for the seating in the parks. We will however raise the issue with the District Council.

Mr I Smart.

Is the sewerage works capable of handling waste from all the new development in the town?

Cllr Whyte: As part of the Lace Hill development there is a considerable sum set aside to extend the sewage works, we are reliant on AVDC to ensure the work is carried out.

Mr A Johnson

More and more cars are parking in the skate park, the verges are being destroyed, what is the plan for that area?

The Town Clerk: AVDC have plans to put bollards up at the access road entrance, at some point before the end of the year. The play area is also due for redevelopment.

Mr A Johnson

With all the development underway in the town and 100's of new houses what is the plan for S106 payments? Will there be funds scheduled for amenities within the town? How can the Cricket Club access funds?

The Town Clerk: Approximately £520,000 has been provided by the Moreton Road Development to be spent on sport and leisure provision; an extension to the Bridge St Play Area is planned, along with improvements to the bus service. The Lace Hill development will have provision for two public play areas and a community hall with changing facilities and football pitch.

Also as part of the Buckingham Neighbourhood Development Plan we have identified that although there are lot of sports clubs in the town, there is a need for many new facilities. We would like to arrange meetings with AVDC; agencies such as Sport for England and many of the local clubs to discuss the issue further, look into the deficit in facilities, and supplements available for funding.

Mr G Goodgame, Question:

There was a recent Planning application for the Ford Meadow site, for 14-15 Georgian town houses – not favourably looked on by the Planning Committee, but no further feedback – can you update us?

Cllr Whyte: The application has not progressed, I would encourage you to make a response to the Neighbourhood Plan questionnaire to re-enforce the need to keep the site as leisure or open space in the town.

7. Mayor's points for information

The Mayor informed the audience of an Open Day at Swan Pool on 13th April.

The Mayor reported that members of Thames Valley Police would be presented with Shrievalty Awards by the three High sheriffs of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire this month. This Year the Aylesbury Vale Neighbourhood Watch team under the supervision of Inspector Emma Garside were receiving the award.

The Aylesbury Vale rural Neighbourhood Teams have risen to the challenge of tackling rural crime in Aylesbury Vale. Through increased visibility and actively working with partners and neighbouring police, crime has been reduced and cross border offenders tackled.

Theft from vehicles in rural beauty spots and non-dwelling burglary where farm and plant machinery are targeted has also been reduced. Regular operations to tackle criminality and raise awareness have also been undertaken. The teams have actively engaged with their communities to make Aylesbury Vale a safer place.

For a full list of officers receiving the award, please visit:
<http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/newsevents/newsevents-pressreleases/newsevents-pressreleases-item.htm?id=249190>

The Mayor then thanked everyone for coming.

The Meeting finished at 9.10pm.

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Chairman of Buckingham Town Council

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Date